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CIVIL AIR PATROL**  
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College for Specialized Training and Reinforcement (CSTAR)

**1. What is CSTAR?**

CSTAR is a brand new program in MTWG designed to be the principal means of offering wing-wide training for cadets in the three distinct stages of their progression: as airmen, as non-commissioned officers, and finally as officers. CSTAR, as a “college,” thus consists of three separate “academies,” one for each of those three stages. As the name of the college indicates, this specialized training is meant to reinforce, not replace, the training that is already being conducted at the squadron level, which is where cadets first learn about CAP and spend most of their time learning and practicing leadership.

**2. How does CSTAR fit into the Chain of Command?**

Since the college is an effort of the MTWG Directorate (i.e. “office”) of Cadet Programs, the Commandant of CSTAR reports directly to the wing director of Cadet Programs, who reports to the wing chief of staff, who reports to the wing commander. Since CSTAR is meant to be “for cadets, by cadets,” there will be select cadets serving on the college staff (e.g., commandant of the college, course director of an academy, instructor, etc.), but they will remain officially members of their respective units and will thus still fall under their respective squadron commander when it comes to non-CSTAR related issues (e.g., accountability, promotions, etc.).

**3. Who runs CSTAR?**

The college is led by a commandant, who will be a cadet field grade officer (i.e. C/Maj – C/Col) appointed by the director of Cadet Programs, in consultation with the wing commander. It is up to the commandant to appoint other CSTAR staff members as s/he sees fit, be it either to the staff of the college itself or to the staff of a particular occurrence of an academy. At the least, the commandant will appoint a cadet to serve as the course director whenever any of the three academies are scheduled to be held. That course director, who reports directly to the commandant, will then be responsible for recruiting qualified cadets and senior members to serve as instructors for that particular occurrence of that academy.

**4. How often and where will the academies be held?**

Common sense dictates that since there are more cadet airman than cadet NCOs, and more cadet NCOs than cadet officers, the Cadet Airman Academy (CAA) would thus be held the most frequently, with the Cadet NCO Academy (CNCOA) being held slightly less frequently, and the Cadet Officer Academy (COA) being held even less frequently still. Right now, the goal is to have three to four CAAs per year, two CNCOAs per year, and one COA per year. In order to maximize participation, these academies would ideally be held at rotating locations throughout the wing, especially those academies that are held less frequently. This means, however, that if an academy is being hosted at your home squadron, you should make every effort to attend since it probably won’t be held at your squadron again for a year or so.

**5. How will the initial rollout of CSTAR occur?**

Since the overall idea of the college is to ensure standardization with national, region, and wing regulations and policies, it seems most logical to start CSTAR by conducting a COA, giving cadet officers throughout the wing an opportunity to come together, get on the same page, share best practices, and thus prepare themselves to serve as course directors and instructors of CNCOAs and CAAs. This will allow for a uniform, top-down distribution of information regarding how we do things as a wing, region, and national organization. Only graduates of a COA will be authorized to serve as a course director for any of CSTAR’s three academies, though instructors may be chosen from among qualified, non-graduates of COA. For this reason, it’s critical that as many cadet officers as possible attend COA.

## 6. How can squadrons host an academy?

Squadrons may certainly be asked to host an occurrence of a CSTAR academy right at their meeting location, especially should the facilities provide an adequate setting, but it should be kept in mind that it will be up to the college, not individual squadrons, to determine where the next occurrence of a particular academy should be held. This decision will be made based on where previous occurrences of that same academy were held and how long ago. As above, each of the three academies will be held at different frequencies, and in order to ensure maximum participation, the locations must be fairly rotated.

## 7. What do cadets get for going?

Other than getting some amazing training that is pretty hard to come by, graduates of CSTAR have been authorized by the wing commander to wear a shoulder cord made of black (the official color of the college) intertwined with either red, green, or gold (the official color of CAA, CNCOA, and COA, respectively). Of course, the incentives don't stop there! Graduation from any of CSTAR's three academies is something that will look very good on the résumé of a cadet applying for a staff position, award, scholarship, or National Cadet Special Activity (NCSA).

## 8. What does CSTAR look like in the future?

Once CSTAR is fully up and running, with at least a year under its belt and a whole slew of COA graduates to choose from to serve as course directors and instructors of CAAs, CNCOAs, and other COAs, it is hoped that two of the three (or perhaps even all of the three!) academies could be held on the very same weekend, perhaps sparking a wing-wide training event that could even include non-CSTAR training like First Aid/CPR or Training Leaders of Cadets (TLC) for the senior members who transported their cadets to the site.

